



STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LINCOLN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT ENJOINS COUPON CONNECTION OF AMERICA, INC. AND ITS OWNERS, DONALD FARMER AND JERRY RODRIGUEZ, FROM DOING BUSINESS IN WEST VIRGINIA

On July 15, 2005, the Circuit Court of Lincoln County held a preliminary injunction hearing in the Attorney General's lawsuit against Coupon Connection of America, Inc., Donald Farmer and Jerry Rodriguez. Attorney General McGraw sought an injunction barring the Texas defendants from engaging in further business in West Virginia and from committing further unfair deceptive acts or practices.

Coupon Connection of America, Inc., a Texas corporation, advertised a "business opportunity" under the guise of selling grocery coupons. In reality, however, its program was a pyramid scheme used to bilk consumers out of large sums of money in a short period of time. In doing so, Coupon Connection of America, Inc. used a variety of misrepresentations and high pressure sales tactics. Most notably, it promised to make those who followed the program rich, and it tremendously overinflated the demand for purchasing its coupon books and "money making" kits. Thus, consumers paid outrageous prices for substantial amounts of worthless inventory.

At the hearing, the State presented four witnesses, three of whom were defrauded by Coupon Connection of America. The fourth witness was Bud Miller, a coupon fraud expert and Executive Director of the Coupon Information Center.

On November 18, 2005, the Circuit Court of Lincoln County issued an Order granting the State's motion for a temporary injunction. The injunction applies to Coupon Connection of America, Inc., Donald Farmer, individually and as President of Coupon Connection of America, Inc., and Jerry Rodriguez, individually and as Vice President of Coupon Connection of America, Inc. Because Coupon Connection of America, Inc. filed for bankruptcy in the Southern District of Texas the day before the hearing, the Lincoln County Circuit Court requested that the bankruptcy court allow the case against the corporation to proceed in Lincoln County Circuit Court. The Lincoln County Order also makes it clear that the lawsuit may proceed against the Coupon Connection of America, Inc. principals, Donald Farmer and Jerry Rodriguez. Moreover, the Order denied defendant Donald Farmer's Motion to Dismiss for lack of personal jurisdiction.

At the time of the hearing, the Attorney General knew of three West Virginia consumers who were defrauded of more than \$100,000 total. The Attorney General has since learned of at least eleven more victims throughout the State. Additionally, the Attorney General has recently learned that Donald Farmer has substantial assets, including a home listed with a Texas real estate agency for \$4,995,000.

Attorney General McGraw noted, "My office wants out-of-state companies to fully understand that West Virginia courts will not tolerate them using fraud to prey on West Virginia residents. Our courts will also not allow out-of-state defendants to hide behind the shield of corporate bankruptcy."

If you have any questions about this matter or want to file a complaint against Coupon Connection of America, Inc., Donald Farmer, or Jerry Rodriguez, please call Attorney General McGraw's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-368-8808 or 304-558-8986.

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